**Series 1000**
**Community/Board**

**Operation**

## POLICY REGARDING VISITORS AND OBSERVATIONS IN SCHOOLS

The Colchester Board of Education (the "Board") encourages visits by citizens, taxpayers, and parents to all school buildings. In order to promote a safe and productive educational environment for all students and staff, the Board requires all visitors to receive prior approval from the school Principal or designee before being permitted to visit any school building. The Board, through the administration, reserves the right to limit visits in accordance with administrative regulations.

The Board further desires to work collaboratively with parents with an educational nexus with the district, its educational programs or the student being observed, to observe their students in their current classrooms or observe proposed educational placements in the Board's schools. The Board, through the administration, reserves the right to limit observations of current and proposed educational placements in accordance with administrative regulations and the Board's Guidelines for Independent Educational Evaluations.

Upon arrival, all visitors and observers must comply with any and all applicable building security procedures, including but not limited to utilizing security buzzers for access, complying with requests for photo identification, reporting directly to and signing in and out at the visitors' reception area of the school office, prominently displaying visitors' badges or other identification required for visitors to the school buildings, limiting access to those areas of the buildings and grounds for which the visitors/observers have authorized access, and complying with directives of school officials at all times. All visitors and observers permitted into school buildings or on school grounds must comply with all school health and safety protocols in place at the time, including but not limited to any health screening protocols.

Legal References:

"Guidelines Regarding Independent Educational Evaluations at Public Expense and In- School Observations," Connecticut State Department of Education (Mar. 28, 2018).

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**Series 1000**
**Community/Board**

**Operation**

## ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS REGARDING VISITORS AND OBSERVATIONS IN SCHOOLS

1. Any person wishing to visit a school building, and/or observe any student program, must obtain prior approval from the building Principal or responsible administrator of the respective school building or program.

2. A visitor to any school building or program must be able to articulate a legitimate reason for the proposed visit and/or observation. Where the visitation involves direct contact with district students, or observation of an identified student or student program, the visitor must have a sufficient educational nexus with the district, its educational programs or the student to support such request.

3. All visits must be reasonable in length and conducted in a manner designed to minimize disruption to the district's educational programs.

4. When a parent/guardian makes a request to observe an identified student or student program, the request will be reviewed with the student's parent/guardian to determine the purpose of the observation, specific questions being addressed, the location(s) of the observation, and the date, time and length of the observation.

5. When determining whether to approve a request to visit and/or observe individual students or student programs, the building Principal or responsible administrator shall consider the following factors:

    a. the frequency of visits;

    b. the duration of the visit;

    c. the number of visitors involved;

    d. the effect of the visit on a particular class or activity;

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e. the age of the students;

f. the nature of the class or program;

g. the potential for disclosure of confidential personally identifiable student information;

h. whether the visitor/observer has a legitimate educational interest in visiting the school;

i. whether the visitor/observer has professional ethical obligations not to disclose any personally identifiable student information;

j. any safety risk to students and school staff; and

k. compliance with the Board's Guidelines for Independent Educational Evaluations, if applicable.

6. The building Principal or responsible administrator has the discretion to limit, or refuse, requests for visits and/or observations of student programs in light of the above criteria. When a requested observation is refused, the building Principal or responsible administrator will provide the parent/guardian with the reason for the decision and will work to develop alternative ways for the parent/guardian to obtain the information the parent/guardian seeks.

7. If a building Principal or responsible administrator approves a request to visit a school building and/or observe a student program, arrangements must be made in advance to ensure that the visit will not disrupt educational programs. The length and scope of any visit shall be determined by the building Principal or responsible administrator in accordance with these regulations and accompanying Board policy. The building Principal or responsible administrator shall determine a reasonable amount of time for observations of individual students or student programs.

8. Upon arrival, all visitors must comply with any and all applicable building security procedures, including but not limited to utilizing security buzzers for access, complying with requests for photo identification, reporting directly to and signing in and out at the visitors' reception area of the school office, prominently displaying visitors' badges or other identification required for visitors to the school buildings, limiting access to those areas of the buildings and grounds for which the visitors have authorized access, and complying with directives of school officials at all times.


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9. The district has an obligation to maintain the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information. All visitors and observers must restrict their visits and observations to the purpose identified in the request to visit or observe and are strictly prohibited from observing or collecting information on other students within the school. If the visitor/observer views, accesses or otherwise obtains personally identifiable student information concerning another student, the visitor/observer must notify the building Principal or responsible administrator as soon as possible.

10. All visitors and observers permitted inside school buildings or on school grounds must comply with all school health and safety protocols in place at the time, including but not limited to any health screening protocols.

11. A refusal to comply with any of the Board's policy provisions and/or regulations concerning visitors shall constitute grounds for denial of the visitor's privileges, as determined appropriate by the building Principal or designee. Such refusal may also result in a referral to law enforcement personnel, as determined appropriate by the building Principal or designee.

Legal References:

"Guidelines Regarding Independent Educational Evaluations at Public Expense and In- School Observations," Connecticut State Department of Education (Mar. 28, 2018).

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